

Lesson 26 Lecture

Psalms 48, 87, 89, 102, 114, 127, 132

Welcome! We are in the final stretch of this year's study – arriving at Lesson 26 – learning about God's Promises, Priorities & Treasures. As a speaker for POW, we try to not simply repeat the homework – let's face it, you've read the Scriptures, you've completed the homework, and you've just spent about an hour going over all of them. If there is something in the reading that may seem like it needs clarification, we'll focus on that, but we typically try to supplement the topic with other Scripture that helps apply the topic to our lives. For some strange reason, I initially struggled with what to add to this – which would seem silly since there is plenty of Scriptures to choose from in the 7 Psalms for today. Then, I have to thank Carol for naming the topic to this Lesson – it truly is inspired, "God's Promises, Priorities & Treasures."

I took the liberty of altering the order of today's topic because I saw a revolving theme, or relationship, with the three items. Let's start with "Treasure" - in the dictionary, "Treasure" can be used either as a verb or a noun. As a verb, "to retain carefully or keep in store, as in the mind; to regard or treat as precious; cherish; to put away for security or future use." We see here that there is an action of appreciation and protection upon the personal value of something or someone. Treasure is also a noun, "wealth or riches stored or accumulated, esp. in the form of precious metals, money, jewels, or plate. Any thing or person greatly valued or highly prized." As a noun, we see that there is an attempt to monetize or quantify the value of something or someone. In the Bible, the word Treasure, or some derivation of it, is used 78 times. When man uses it, it is referencing things. When God uses it – it is referred to His people and Israel.

Now Priority can be used either as a noun or an adjective:

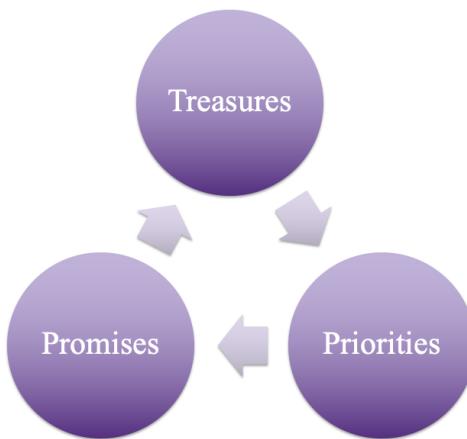
- As a noun, "the right to precede others in order, rank, privilege, etc.; something given special attention."
- As an adjective. "highest or higher importance, rank, privilege."

So, when we think of making something or someone a priority, we are putting the thing or person of utmost importance to our attention.

Finally, we get to Promise – as with our other two words, Promise can be used in two different parts of speech.

- First, as a noun, “a declaration that something will or will not be done, given, etc. by one; an express assurance on which expectation is to be based.”
- Promise can also be used as a verb, “to engage or undertake by promise; to make a promise of something to (a specified person)”

In either case, if someone makes a promise, the expectation of someone receiving the promise should be that the person making the promise will deliver on it. In other words, “A promise is of no more value than the ability of the one who makes it to carry through. It also includes a willingness to do so.” So, you’re probably wondering why I’m taking so much time reading definitions from the dictionary, right? I believe there is a circular relationship between these three terms.



For those things and people that we treasure – those things and people which we cherish or regard as precious and value greatly. We make them a priority in our lives – we make them our utmost importance – and because we do this, we make promises that we will make every effort to love, protect, and care for them because we see them as treasures. Can you see how these flow together?

So, the title of our Lesson is **“God’s”** Promises, Priorities, and Treasures. Who or what does God treasure? As I mentioned earlier, when God uses the word treasure, or some form of it, He is virtually always referencing His people. In the Old Testament, God treasured Abraham’s faith, so God made it His priority to bless Abraham’s descendants and made a promise that He would make a great nation from His bloodline. From Abraham to Isaac to Jacob, God remained faithful to His promise. From Jacob came the 12 tribes of Israel, and the nation did indeed become great. In Exodus 19:5, God tells Moses to tell the Israelites, “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my

treasured possession.” God further expressed His feelings for the Nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 14:2: “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession.”

You can see God stating here that they are a priority to Him as He describes them as holy – that they’re chosen. Later in Deuteronomy 26:18, we see God confirming His promise to them that they are a treasured possession, “And the LORD has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised.”

In our reading, we learn that God not only treasures the people of Israel, but he has a special affection for the location of His people – Jerusalem and the Land of Israel:

- Psalm 87:2: “The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.”
- Psalm 48:2-3a: “It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King. God is in her citadels; He has shown himself to be her fortress.”

A citadel is a fortress, a strongly fortified place – a stronghold. This verse shows us God’s priority regarding Mount Zion and Jerusalem – He is dwelling in their citadels; He is their fortress. Now that’s a very personal priority!

A person’s priorities are typically telling signs to his/hers character – what is important to him/her – what he/she treasure.

- Psalm 89:5: “The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your *faithfulness* too, in the assembly of the holy ones.”
- Psalm 89:14: “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.”

In Psalm 89 we read about some of God’s character traits – faithfulness, righteousness, justice, and love. But these aren’t just character traits – they are His priorities. These Scriptures tell us God makes it His priority that He is faithful to those he treasures. The foundation of God’s throne is righteousness and justice. Now a throne is a seat of authority and power, so what is of utmost importance, or priority, to God’s character as the Almighty One is righteousness and justice. Finally, and most importantly, we see love paving the way of God. Don’t we all want love to be our utmost priority? I’ll get back to this in a few minutes.

The fruit of God's priorities are His promises. Let's take a look at some of His promises:

- Psalm 48:9b: He will be our guide even to the end.
- Psalm 102:16: For the LORD will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory.
- Psalm 102:17: He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea.
- Psalm 132:15-16: I will bless her [Zion] with abundant provisions; her poor will I satisfy with food. I will clothe her [Zion] priests with salvation, and her saints will ever sing for joy.

So, we see God making many promises to Zion and its people. But God singled out one key person from the chosen ones He treasured, and He made him a priority and some important promises. King David was known in Scripture as "A Man After God's Own Heart". It is a label to which we all should aspire. David may be God's greatest priority. His passion for the LORD was unmatched. Out of that priority, came this desire – this promise in Psalm 132:2-5: "He swore an oath to the LORD and made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob: "I will not enter my house or go to my bed - I will allow no sleep to my eyes, no slumber to my eyelids, till I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob."

So, David wants to build a house for the LORD. Now we know the LORD did not allow David to do this because he had blood on his hands, but God honored David's faithfulness – his impassioned statement of making a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob his highest priority. In honoring David's faithfulness, God made David His priority by anointing him as noted in Psalm 89:19b-20: "I have bestowed strength on a warrior; I have exalted a young man from among the people. I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him."

Upon making David His priority, He makes some serious promises to David in Psalm 89:21-25: "My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him. No enemy will subject him to tribute; no wicked man will oppress him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries. My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted. I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers." David was the greatest king in Israel's history – the nation never flourished any more than it did under David's reign, so God indeed delivered on these promises. But there was one promise that means the most to us. In Psalm 89 we read about God's promise that David's line will be established forever. He then goes on to say He will appoint His firstborn – the most exalted of

kings of the earth – Jesus. He immediately demonstrates His priority for Jesus – “I will maintain my love to him forever” and then promises that His covenant with Him will never fail.

I made the statement a few minutes ago that a promise is of no more value than the ability of the one who makes it to carry through. It also includes a willingness to do so. Numbers 23:19 tells us about God’s inability to lie, “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”

It’s absolutely critical that we believe God’s promises. He has, is, and always will fulfill on His promises.

God delivered on His promise of establishing the most exalted King on earth – His Son, Jesus. He warned about earthly treasures - the accumulation of material items – gold, silver, and things. Why?

- Matthew 6:19-20: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”
- Matthew 19:21: Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.”

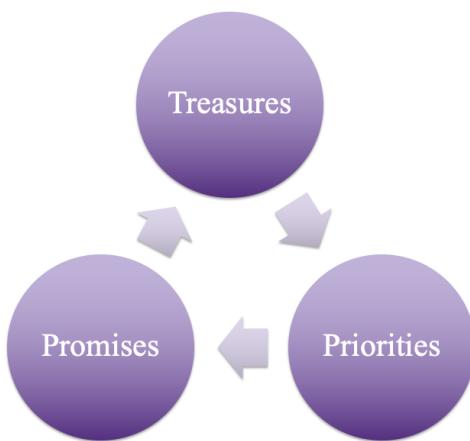
Because our earthly treasures can be stolen. Now who is famous for stealing treasure? Pirates, right? Well, pirates are always looking for what kind of treasure? Buried treasure, right? Whom should we treasure? Jesus, right. But pirates can’t steal Him, can they? Why not? He’s not buried! He was, but He’s alive! Satan is like a pirate – seeking to rob us of our treasure – our living relationship with Jesus.

If you don’t remember anything else I’ve said today, please follow closely to what I’m about to say. Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Remember that the descendants of Abraham – the nation of Israel – were God’s treasured possession, right. Now watch this.

Romans 4:13,16: “For the promise that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham or his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith . . . therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed”

These verses in Romans are telling us that by our faith in Jesus, we are joint heirs of the promise of the descendants of Abraham – we are God’s treasured possession. If that is true, then by Jesus’ statement in Matthew 6:21 – that where your treasure is, there you will be also – then we are where God’s heart is. We are God’s treasured possession. Do you believe it? A lot of us don’t because if we really believed it, our lives would never be the same. So, I’m going to make you say it. I’ll say it first, and then we’ll say it together. “I am a treasured possession of God’s.” We need to remember that when he draws his sword of accusations, lies, and deceptions, we are to draw our sword – the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. The Word will always be victorious.

Now let’s go back to the original diagram of our Lesson:



With what we just all agreed to, let’s follow the relationship. We are all God’s treasure which makes us His priority. Out of that priority, He makes promises to those He treasures. God fulfilled His promises to Abraham and David in the person of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. If we’ve trusted our eternal destiny in the fulfilled promise of Jesus, shouldn’t we trust in all of His promises? What’s the best way to demonstrate that trust? Treasure your relationship with Jesus. Make Him your priority. Based on the Word of God, I promise it will be worth it. Let’s pray.